IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 12, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- In another aspect, this invention relates to new CRP immunoassay compositions. Said compositions comprise the low affinity ($K_D \sim 10^{-7}$ M) anti-human CRP monoclonal antibody (CRP5-23), and an antiidiotypic antibody raised against CRP5-23. We found that CRP5-23 binding to CRP, advantageously, is insensitive to ionized calcium. The hybridoma for this antibody has been deposited on February 16, 2000 with the ATCC with a designation of PTA-1354.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 23 and continuing to page 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

—The second immunomaterial is an antiidiotypic antibody raised against CRP5-23 and selected for its ability to compete with human CRP for binding to CRP5-23, such that binding of CRP and the antiidiotype antibody to CRP5-23 are mutually exclusive. A hybridoma capable of producing such an antiidiotypic antibody has been deposited with the ATCC on February 16, 2000 and given the designation PTA-1353. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 21 and continuing to page 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~--Figure 2~~ Figures 2A and 2B: depicts the two formats in which competitive immunoassays can be configured using a low affinity antiCRP antibody and its corresponding antiidiotypic antibody. In Format 1 (Fig. 2A), the antiidiotypic antibody C23id2-6.3, which serves as a CRP surrogate, is immobilized on the surface of a plastic microtiter plate. HRP-conjugated antiCRP monoclonal antibody CRP5-23 is added to the well along with sample containing CRP. The amount of CRP is ultimately reflected in the amount of HRP-CRP5-23 that binds to the immobilized antiidiotypic antibody. In Format 2 (Fig.2B), the CRP5-23

monoclonal antibody is immobilized and the HRP-conjugated antiidiotypic antibody competes with CRP in the sample for the CRP5-23 binding sites. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--~~Figure 3~~ Figures 3A and 3B: CRP dose response curves for each format in conventional microtiter plates. Both formats exhibit descending dose response curves with increasing CRP concentrations and the dose-response curve is positioned in the clinically relevant range for each assay. Format 1 is depicted in ~~(A)~~Fig. 3A; Format 2 in Fig. 3B~~(B)~~. The absorbency at 414 nm reflects the amount of detectable HRP activity. In Fig. 3A~~(A)~~, the closed diamonds define the dose-response curve obtained with the immobilized C23id2-6.3 and HRP-labeled CRP5-23; the closed squares define the response when CRP5-23 was substituted for the C23id2-6.3, as a control. In Fig. 3B~~(B)~~, the closed squares define the dose-response curve obtained with immobilized CRP5-23 and HRP-labeled C23id2-6.3; the closed diamonds define the dose response curve when C23id2-6.3 was substituted for CRP5-23, as a control. Error bars indicate the average and standard deviation of duplicates. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--~~Figure 7~~Figures 7A and 7B: CRP dose-response curve from immunoassays configured for the VITROS® ECi automated immunoassay analyzer system. In these variations the immobilized component is conjugated with biotin and present initially as a soluble component. 50 µL of the biotinylated reagent was added to streptavidin-coated well after the addition of 40 µL of CRP-containing sample and before the addition of 50 µL of the HRP-conjugated reagent. After an incubation of 8 minutes, the well was exhaustively washed and the well-associated HRP activity was detected by means of a chemiluminescent substrate. Format 1 is depicted in Fig. 7A~~(A)~~; Format 2 in Fig. 7B~~(B)~~. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 11 and continuing to page 15, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Two versions of ELISA format based competitive immunoassays were developed using the anti-CRP antibody CRP5-23 and its antiidiotype C23id2-6.3 along with their HRP conjugated partners. The two ELISA formats are illustrated in Figures 2A and 2B and the corresponding dose-response curves for CRP are presented in Figures 3A and 3B. As depicted in ~~the figure~~ Figure 2A, format 1 consists of the antiidiotypic antibody immobilized onto the plate surface and the HRP-labeled anti-CRP antibody competes with soluble CRP for sites on the immobilized antiidiotypic antibody. Format 2 in Figure 2B uses the opposite orientation of reagents wherein the anti-CRP antibody is immobilized while the HRP-labeled antiidiotypic antibody and CRP in solution compete for antiCRP sites on the plate. Standard ELISA procedures were followed to immobilize antibody, block non-specific sites, titer labels, and for signal generation and detection. Decreasing dose-response curves with increasing CRP concentrations were observed using both formats, as illustrated. --